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ABSTRACT

In the past decade, the mini-course has appeared on the educational scene as an alternative with much curriculum potential. The term "mini-course" appears in a wide variety of possibilities. Some schools use a "free form" approach; i.e., courses or experiences usually planned by or with students but carrying no academic credit. In terms of credit courses, the most common practice is to offer quarter courses that are usually nine or ten weeks in length. Colleges and a few secondary schools plan an interim, in which intensive, short-term courses may be chosen and which may or may not relate to the student's regular program. The use of mini-course offerings is justified on the grounds that such courses capitalize on the interests of the learner, utilize the interests and strengths of the teachers, increase the scope of the curriculum, develop student responsibility, tie school and community closer together, and allow experiments with course offerings. Among the common characteristics is that of ungradedness--40 or 50 English courses can be offered at a senior high school and any student from the 10th, 11th, or 12th grade may select a course of his choice. Some teachers and administrators fear that use of the mini-course will "fragment the curriculum." Others are concerned about the logistic difficulties of frequent scheduling. However, "arena scheduling" and the use of computers enables most administrators to overcome this difficulty. (Author)

VASSP, Mar '79

**Maximizing the Mini:
A Look at Curriculum Alternatives**

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A message from the written media is that our society is in a period of great change. This thought can be found in our daily newspapers as well as in professional journals. Does change characterize our educational systems? If so, what is the nature of that change? Just a little over a decade ago, Barnaby Keeney, then President of Brown University, noted "Changing the curriculum, by the way, is about as easy as moving a cemetery, and sometimes takes about as long." Can we open the curriculum coffin? We used to hear that the lag between an idea and implementation in curriculum was about 30 years. Observers now think that that margin has been reduced to 10 or 15 years. However, Silberman and Goodlad, from their observations, conclude that the curriculum is as much the same as it was 20 years ago.

During the Cavelti Reign the North Central Association made a study of curriculum innovations in the secondary schools. Although many changes were noted, particularly in the line of introducing new programs such as PSEC Physics, a discouraging note was that two or three years later many of these innovations had disappeared. Some of you may recall that just over a decade ago, Bob Gilchrist in addressing the NCA Convention reminded you that being a school administrator is a rough job because "the schools are being called upon to meet the demands of life in a period of rapid change and development." And this was before the rash of student actions and community demands for involvement.

Lest you feel that I am painting an entirely gloomy picture, I hurry to assure you that there is hope in the form of a new comet which has appeared recently on the curriculum horizon. The name of this comet is

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Mini-Course. In the following presentation I would like to discuss with you these five questions:

1. The mini-courses has taken on many forms. Just what are they?
2. Why has the mini-course appeared in many school systems throughout the country?
3. How does it measure up in terms of curriculum analysis?
4. What questions does its use raise?
5. What does it suggest for the future?

1. Many Forms of Minis

The many forms of mini-courses present a panorama of possibilities. They might be plotted on a continuum all the way from one day per year to one semester. Some of these variations are courses which carry credits or partial credits. Others are "experiences" and carry no credit as such. Let's examine some of these variations as they have been developed in school systems throughout the United States. (By the way, the data for this presentation are based upon a study of documents and/or visitations from approximately ⁵⁰ elementary schools, 276 secondary schools, 60 institutions of higher education, as well as reports in many educational journals.)

A number of schools have experimented with suspending all regular classes for one day to have a once a year special emphasis such as "Environmental Day" or "Human Relations Day." In other places you will find a full week given over to a variety of courses developed by students, laymen and faculty. Short Ridge High School in Indianapolis, for example, has a "Soul Week." If you go to Iowa City, you may encounter "Black America Week," with a variety of offerings for both large and small groups. Such ventures carrying no credit are usually termed "free-form experiments."

Some schools have used this free-form idea to offer interest-based courses during a lunch period or during an activity period. If you move to credit courses, you usually find them a quarter in length, i.e., nine or ten weeks. In some places, such as Omaha, they have a variation, however, of running courses from three to nine weeks depending upon the nature of the course itself. Tacoma, Washington, has an interesting mini-quarter which is a six-week period of special courses held between two fifteen-week sessions.

This latter variation suggests the interim approach which is used chiefly at the collegiate level. Today there are over 400 colleges which belong to a 4-1-4 program which in essence has a four month fall program, a one month (usually January) interim, and a four month spring program. In the interim session, the student usually takes one course in depth, and it may or may not be at all related to his usual academic program. This interim idea has also been adopted by some secondary schools such as Marshall Junior High School in Janesville, Wisconsin.

Most school systems experience a case of "springitus" - especially in private schools during the senior year. A number of systems have developed a series of "senior slump" experiences; others have introduced an end-of-year program when enthusiasm and energy for formal courses is usually at a low point.

Secondary schools have long been plagued with a problem of study halls. As many senior high schools have moved toward an open campus or a modified open campus, the mini-course has emerged as one way of dealing with this. For example, when a student is not scheduled for any particular academic classes, he has at his fingertips options for his "unscheduled time."

During this time he may go to a study hall if he so desires. He might go to instructional media center to use the resources there. He might prefer to go to the cafeteria to eat or just to chat. To direct interest and energy to positive action, a number of schools have developed with the students a variety of mini-courses which provide an option during the unscheduled time.

Perhaps the longest time period for a mini-course would be the semester. Trenton, Michigan, which was noted for its APEX Program in English, replied to my questionnaire indicating that they did not have mini-courses since all of their courses were a semester. We maintain that if a school has traditionally had year courses and reduces them to genuine self-contained semester courses, then they have by this 50% reduction, a form of mini. As one New Hampshire school which has both nine and eighteen week offerings said, "We call our semester courses 'maxi-minis.'" One interesting variation of the semester concept is illustrated by a school in suburban Philadelphia which has the first semester in English and Social Studies required. Then during the second semester there are two quarters set up with electives for each quarter.

One final thought comes in relationship to the emerging interest in the year-round school concept. In some sections, especially Florida where this has become popular, the conventional academic year is divided into four units and the summer becomes a fifth one. Thus they have coined the word "quinmaster." In most arrangements like this the student is expected to go only four of the five masters; thus, a teacher can not be sure that Johnny Jones who is with her the first master will be there the second master. Plans like this and the 45-15 arrangement have more or less dictated

that the unit, whether it be a master or a 45 day block, be self-contained. The mini-course approach is one answer.

One other term is commonly found in the development of mini-courses. That is the word "phase." Each student is urged to select a phase, or level of difficulty, at which he feels he can best grasp the subject providing he is willing to put forth a reasonable amount of effort. A student need not select the same phase for each course, i.e., he may be in Phase 3 in English and Phase 2 in Mathematics. Generally, Phase I is the designation given to those courses which are designed to help students who are quite deficient in basic skills and presumably need much personal help and attention. At the other end of the scale is Phase 5 for courses which are designed to give students an opportunity to take classes which are more demanding in terms of the skills involved and/or the concepts which must be handled. Miami Springs High School in Florida also has a Phase X for *Courses at this level are often to challenge students. No criteria have been established to project success at any given level.*

For the critic who complains that little actual change is going on in the educational scene, the mini-course concept confronts him with its great variety and its interesting flexibility.

2. Why A Mini-Course?

What are some of the reasons why school leadership is turning to the mini-course? In some cases it was a matter of "the time was ripe." Factors reported include such items as: restlessness on the part of students for curricular changes, a principal with ideas and energy for curricular leadership, enthusiasm of teachers who had attended a convention where elective courses were described, interest of a community group or agency cooperating with school endeavors. Doubtless there were some who had jumped

on the "curriculum band wagon," - "Everybody else is doing it." More fundamentally has been the crystallization of a feeling that many courses are outdated, that students should have some input in their new program making. There is a general feeling throughout the country that people should have options.

Mini-courses have been devised that run all the way from the remedial to the highly sophisticated. As we have noted, they vary in length from one day to one semester and their rationales include a variety of purposes. An analysis of all their statements indicates as many as fifty different goals which they hope to attain through the installation of short term electives. Of these goals, the ones most frequently mentioned are:

- To involve the learner in program planning and implementation.
- To capitalize upon the interests of the learner.
- To utilize the interests and strengths of the teachers.
- To improve teaching.
- To increase the scope of the curriculum.
- To provide a more relevant educational program.
- To develop student responsibility.
- To provide students with options.
- To tie the community and the school closer together.
- To provide an opportunity to experiment with course offerings.
- To personalize the program.

These and other statements highlight such words as "options," "interests," "short term," "cooperation," and "experimentation." In short, many school leaders believe that mini-courses are well suited for facilitating educational innovations and for the piloting of new programs. That is why such institutions as the Logos School in St. Louis observed, "This means we must keep learning . . . unlearning as well as relearning . . . if we are not to become obsolete ourselves. Thus, we want to become learners, not knowers."

3. Relationship to Curriculum Development Principles

How does the concept and the practice of mini-course shape up in terms of basic principles of curriculum improvement? First of all, there is the matter of philosophy. What do you believe? What are the assumptions

underlying your curriculum decisions? Far too often courses have existed in the past from year to year just because, "They are there." Teachers were assigned on a basis of seniority rather than interests or expertise. Students were often assigned on a basis of tracking or grouping, but nobody was happy about it, and everyone was locked in for the year. The coming of the mini-course, recent pressures for accountability and the emphasis on behavioral objectives have turned attention to "why." Isn't learning really a highly individual process? Won't teachers teach better and won't students learn better when courses are based upon their respective interests? Isn't exposure to the real world essential to meaningful learning? Can't students learn from each other as well as from teachers? Need all students learn the same things? Are there certain subjects that do not need to be as lengthy as a semester or as a school year? Won't teachers and students benefit from a change of pace? If you will answer "yes" even tentatively to most of these and similar questions, you have moved one step in the direction of the mini-course experience.

After clarifying his beliefs, the curriculum worker goes to objectives. A number have already been mentioned in earlier remarks, but it is important to note that a major goal of education is to develop self-directed persons. How can a person become self-directed if he is never given the chance to make decisions and to accept the responsibility of his decisions? The elective phase of most mini-programs provides an opportunity to move from directed to nondirected education. Many of you doubtless recall the play by Sidney Howard entitled, "The Silver Cord." The mini-course provides a way of cutting the cord between the mother-school and the student-child.

We hear much about "schools without failure." One way to move in this direction is to humanize education, and presenting offerings based on interest is one step in that direction. Also we recognize that there is sometimes a mis-match between student and teacher, between student and subject. Under the conventional program this mis-match must be continued for a year with at least unpleasantness and abrasiveness on both sides. However with a mini-course of only nine or ten weeks, this situation can be corrected during the next elective period.

Flexibility is another desirable element in an improved curriculum. The opening remarks of this presentation indicated to you that the mini-course has a coat of many colors. It also enables a more capable student to take additional courses during one quarter and then perhaps reverting to the usual load during another quarter when the demands upon his time are unusually heavy. Also many schools recognize that there is nothing magic about having courses the same length whether it be nine weeks, eighteen weeks, or thirty-six weeks. Thus, why not develop some mini-courses of longer or shorter periods?

Curriculum theorist urge the adoption of the concept of curriculum as "all the experiences provided for the student under the direction of the school." This means attention to aspects other than the formal course structure. The various patterns of free form, non-credit experiments is one indication of what can be done along that line. Also we mentioned the opportunities to develop interest activities during the students' unscheduled time. We hear much about the cooperative principle. Curriculum improvement envisions cooperation upon a broad-base involving administration, teaching staff, learners, community members, and outside experts. The administrator

as the expeditor helps set the stage by encouraging faculties to experiment with curriculum forms. He sees to it that these teachers attend conventions such as the recent NCTE Conference in Philadelphia where there were at least a half a dozen programs dealing with electives in English. He knows that certain members of his faculty are taking graduate work at a university and have access to research resources and ERIC Reports which provide information and assurance to doubting teachers. He gets to know what schools have genuine, on-going mini-course programs and will arrange for teachers to do some visitation.

The teachers, for their part, are encouraged to list topics or subjects or themes which they would like to teach if they had their own way. In English and Social Studies Departments, where most of the action is, there may be as many as 100-150 ideas set forth. These lists are then circulated among the student body who are asked to check those of high interest to them and to add others which they might like to see offered. These dual inventories are then reviewed and collated to develop a workable and digestible educational menu. If you look at the offerings during the unscheduled time at Hall High School in West Hartford, Connecticut, or attend the Environmental Day at Boulder, Colorado, you will find that many of the "courses" are planned and offered by students themselves.

Community related? The main thrust of the Stadium High School mini-program in Tacoma, Washington, was to get the school out into the community and the community into the school. This was achieved to the extent that now all Tacoma high schools are expanding their work experience opportunities for all students. Sometimes community members are the instructors of some courses, sometimes community people are tapped as resource persons for

regular mini-courses.

Since there are many decisions to be made and many anxieties to be allayed, an outside consultant may be called in. Sometimes this is a principal who has had the "baptism by fire" of planning, carrying out and evaluating a mini-course program. Often it would be a department chairman who has had even more direct experience with the nitty-gritty of course planning. Then there may be a university professor who has been in a position to observe and contact more widely than the busy school administrator.

All in all, the mini-course movement has embraced the cooperative principle and has moved far beyond the one man-one course type of curriculum planning.

A basic, but sometimes neglected component of curriculum improvement is the matter of evaluation. Since the mini-course for many is a radical departure from the traditional offering, such attempts draw more critical scrutiny than is the usual case. Consequently, it is important to build evaluation into any attempts. While too few schools as yet have developed or carried on a systematic evaluation of their efforts, it is very common to utilize feedback from teachers, students, and parents at the end of each mini-cycle. These reactions are then used as a basis for deciding what electives should be continued, which should be dropped and which might stand some modification. On this matter of appraisal, it is interesting to note related student behavior. In one elementary school where they have a mini-day about once a month, the principal observed, "On these days no one is running to the bathroom. No one is asking to go out to get a drink. Perhaps they are trying to tell us something!"

4. Questions Raised

As in any kind of curriculum change, there are questions which are

bound to arise. Some feel that this is an indirect criticism of the way they are teaching. Let's look at a few of the questions which commonly arise and which doubtless come to your own mind.

Since the elective feature is basic to most plans and since students have not had the opportunity of this nature before, will they choose what is "good for them?" A few people, regardless of age (including teachers at in-service!) may gravitate to the "snazzy" courses. Others want only the most rigorous as a personal challenge. In general, as expert ~~ness~~ begins to take over, the extremes level off. If you feel that kids are too immature to make such important decisions, probably they will be! One teacher declared, "You know, it's not so much a matter of immaturity as inadequate background. Perhaps all along the educational line we should move up decision making as an educational priority and experience." While testimony from actual school experiences does not support completely the assumption that "students will choose wisely," the majority of schools are finding that students who feel that certain courses may be worthwhile will exercise their options carefully. Philosophically speaking, if the student does make an unwise choice, he may profit by learning how to off-set a poor decision. The school role now changes from directing to assisting the learner to deal with appropriate alternatives and their consequences. Keep in mind that such decisions are not to be made in isolation. A genuine counseling opportunity arises as a wise teacher helps each student plot his options against his strengths, weaknesses and aspirations.

What grade levels should be included? The majority of schools, whether elementary, secondary or higher education, are moving to some degree of non-gradedness. The phrase "some degree" is included because the choices may

be limited only to juniors and seniors or to the "upper division" in any school unit. This restriction is more true in academic electives than in the all-school free form experiences. Some teachers may be appalled at the idea of having 15 and 13 year olds in the same class, yet their announced philosophy states that students learn from each other, not just from older adults. Also you yourself recognize that grade levels is a concept based on chronological age which, unfortunately for the assumption, does not coincide with educational age nor with personal experience. Many schools have expressed dissatisfaction with the tracking system. This is one reason why they decided to experiment with non-graded electives, and most of them are finding it much more satisfactory.

How long should the mini-course be? Free form opportunities for unassigned time may run as long as there is interest on both sides. When it comes to the academic program, the tendency is to relate to the marking period currently being used, thus the quarter system of nine or ten weeks seems to be very popular. Ideally, the length should be determined by the nature of the topic; practically, most offerings will coincide with some administrative period. This raises a concern among some teachers that the time is "too short." "I don't have time to get to know my students." This is probably true in large schools for the teacher who wants to stand (or sit!) in front of the class and do most of the talking. The mini-concept should be student-oriented with student participation. However, when time constraints are now a few weeks, planning and purposes must be made clear and this forces the teacher to look more carefully at his students. One principal reported, "Both students and teachers are now more tolerant when they know that in only twelve weeks they will be in a new situation." "Too

short," then, is a relative term - dependent upon the nature of the course, the degree of student-teacher interaction, and the willingness to give it a try.

What happens to sequences? If students are given a real opportunity to choose from many electives, there can be no guarantee of course-to-course continuity. The assumption is that organized disciplines are highly sequential in nature - that is, one must learn to add before he can multiply. Suffice to say here that mathematics and foreign language departments are much concerned with continuity and prerequisites and hence have not moved as far in electives as have English and social studies departments. One department chairman in a letter to me declared, "My feeling about the teaching of English is that it really isn't a sequential discipline. I am really not terribly concerned about continuity as long as a student has as many experiences in reading, writing, speaking and listening."

One approach is to require a certain base course or two in which the fundamental structure is laid out. Then the electives spring out from that. It is important to recognize that continuity really lies within the learner, not within the subject.

How can all these courses be scheduled? When I visit a school which is trying mini-courses, I sometimes get two contrasting reactions. The English Department is quite excited about the fact that "kids are really getting to like English." Then I go to the person who is responsible for the scheduling. He throws up his hands and shouts, "Those English people are driving me crazy. Why can't they stick to the old courses they used to offer?" If only one or two departments want to try quarter electives and the rest of the school goes on a semester or year basis, certainly

complications can arise. Most principals are able to locate someone on the staff who has know-how and ingenuity in dealing with scheduling variations. They find that one way to "cheat" on the computer is to insert a pseudo number into the listings and then later "plug in" whatever mini-courses seem to be desirable in terms of actual student selections. Increasingly, school men are deciding to imitate college catalogues where courses are scheduled and students make up their own programs from what interests them and from what is available for their individual time slots.

If you have studied the 45-15 scheme, you have doubtless heard of the Valley View continuous school year plan in Lockport, Illinois. They worked out an eight-step procedure for its final scheduling which facilitates their handling the many short term courses.

What would it cost? In these days of budget pinches in schools, administrators and board members will certainly wonder if the proposed alternatives will cost more. In one sense it costs to build any worthwhile program. There is no indication that setting up a mini-plan, per se, costs any more than any other curriculum innovation of equal magnitude. Writing programs does involve a small cost for materials and more expense for clerical help. Perhaps the chief cost is time. If teachers are relieved of some classes to plan and write, then hiring of substitutes would be one item. More likely, work during the year will be absorbed during department meetings and by volunteered effort. Time cost shows up in one way that is unique to short term courses in contrast to yearly selections. Reference has just been made to the matter of more time necessary for scheduling. Much more time is necessary for counseling - both by certified counselors and by classroom teachers, but this is true of any venture that moves toward individualizing the curriculum.

Will students miss something? Naturally parents and teachers are concerned about the possibility that electives may be more interesting but not as effective in preparation. In a short term course the tendency is to deal with one theme or one topic and hence the aim is depth rather than breadth. Frederick A. Johnson (1961), in his doctoral study at the University of Minnesota, concluded that students may be taught either in depth or breadth without lowering academic achievement. Sylvester Kohut (1973), Assistant Professor of Secondary Education, at St. Frances College, Fort Wayne, Indiana, found that students enrolled in mini-course social studies showed a significant improvement in attitude toward the teachers performance. He found that transfer students entering high school are better adjusted because the variety of course offerings eliminate subject matter repetition. He also noted that mini-course offerings provide for in-depth examinations of controversial issues while maintaining outlets for individualized instruction. He also found, by the way, that the use of paperbacks, fugitive materials, teacher constructed materials, and materials provided by interested students and laymen actually reduce the expenditure cost.

Yes, but what about college boards? Probably your English Department chairman has noted the report by Franklin G. Myers in the English Record for February, 1971. As chairman of the English Department at Scarsdale High School in New York, Mr. Meyers tells of the very thorough evaluation project carried out in terms of their "English option plan" which began in the fall of 1968. As you doubtless know, Scarsdale is an academic-minded community; so concerns were raised about whether or not a student would succeed in college. Originally offered as an option in the junior and senior year, the program has attracted more and more students each year.

Also the school has felt satisfied to the extent that they are now instituting a pilot elective program in grades nine and ten. In their studies the faculty found that the majority of students felt that they learned as much or more composition by electives and that this approach helped them "connect their various subject areas and to communicate." Feedback from those who went through the program and then went on to college brought such statements as the following: "The electives program gave me a much broader background than most high school students received in English." A large selection of instructors, each with a diversified teaching technique and ideas, was an excellent college preparation in comparison to having a single teacher for the entire year." "Electives may not be perfect for preparing students for college, but it's better than regular English!"

Roberts and Gable (1973), at the University of Connecticut found the mini-course as a place where, "the affective and the cognitive meet." You may have noted in their article in the May 1973 issue of the Phi Delta Kappan that they were not sure whether mini-courses were going to be a positive addition or merely another fad. However, they did conclude, "The mini-course curriculum has several advantages." They recommend its use to the American high school. The disadvantages seem to be fewer and less important. Yes, a curriculum based on mini-courses may well be a positive step in the search for learning experiences which give weight to both affective and cognitive domains.

5. The Style of the Future?

This is an era of options. Students want options. Teachers want options. Mini-courses provide one avenue to this desire for choices. Is the movement a passing fad or does it have a real future in the curriculum world?

What does a look at trends reveal for you? If you receive the BSCS Newsletter you will have noted in the September 1973 edition that they find that mini-courses are already here and "probably will provide a meaningful step-stone into the future."

Guenther and Ridgway (1973), made a survey of high schools in Kansas. Eighty-six percent of the schools in this state responded and they indicated that twenty-eight percent of these schools were offering mini-courses during the fall of 1972. An additional thirty percent are actively considering the addition of mini-courses during the coming year. Surveys from other states indicate a similar increase in the number of schools adopting this type of program.

Although the majority of reports in my own study came from secondary schools, it is important to point out that elementary schools are increasingly experimenting with some variation. Also you should be reminded that the interim program at the collegiate level is on the increase throughout the United States. Doubtless, many of you have heard of the work of Postelthwaite at Purdue University in Biological Sciences. The School of Nursing at that same institution has picked up his mini-course approach. Then there is the report in Engineering Education by Birth and McConkey. The title of their article is significant: "Cornell's Freshman Mini-Courses: They Work!."

Assuming for the moment that the mini-course is an innovation which will become a basic ingredient in the curriculum of the future, it is important to point out that with any change there are a number of guidelines which we should identify to help make that first uneasy step a bit more secure.

1. Clarify curriculum values - Is it change for change sake

or a genuine desire to achieve important goals which have not otherwise been undertaken? Do you see curriculum planning as a cooperative venture?

2. Choose basic organizational pattern of curriculum - Will you continue to look upon the educational program as a series of discrete subjects? Will you push for interdisciplinary concepts? Can you envision education organized around themes or topics or problems?
3. Decide on a basic staff utilization pattern - How will your staff be organized to carry out the program?
4. Decide on a basic grouping strategy - Will students and courses be identified on a conventional grade level or as ungraded? Will students be grouped according to ability or according to interests?
5. Identify the students who are to be the target population - Will those entering the mini-course program be at a certain grade level? For example, in a secondary school will elective programs be open only to juniors and seniors? Will these courses be designed primarily for slow learners or for gifted or for all kinds of learners? If this is to be a pilot program, as doubtless it should be, which students out of your student body will be selected for the program?
6. Isolate the area of curriculum to be worked on - Will this be an entire department, such as English, or will it be selections from that department? Will you limit efforts

primarily to the academic program, or will you start out with some sort of "free form" experiences?

7. Determine the common and critical learning outcomes for the group under consideration - What are the basic competencies that the learner should have, if any, for selecting a course? What basic competence should be developed through the offerings? What new outcomes do you envision as a result of this experience?
8. Survey pupil interests - If your philosophy is to build a program based upon the interests of students, this should be initiated by going to the student in a variety of ways to get honest feedback.
9. Survey staff interests and competencies - the interest factor applies to staff as well as to students. You may be surprised to find that some English teacher has knowledge and ability and interest in the field of music. Perhaps there is a social studies teacher who would like to offer a course on "making a million." Did you know that that staid math teacher is an expert at scuba diving?
10. Decide upon administrative questions - Shall the mini-courses be three weeks, nine weeks or some other length of time? If free form experiences are to be tried, how long and how often will these be held?
11. Decide on the general framework and outline for each course - One value of the mini-course approach is that teachers who never before have put down their course outlines

on paper are now recognizing that the constraints of time and the challenges of interest require them to take a hard look at what is being proposed. Thus they carefully write out the goals and objectives, the learning activities and procedures for evaluation. This is curriculum-making in miniature.

There is a deodorant commercial which declares, "It's working!" Yes, the short term elective will help drive away the unpleasant odor of a dictating curriculum. Is it for you? That depends upon whether or not you believe that you want to put action to the often-mouthed phrase of personalizing learning. Do you want to be able to offer a student what he wants to learn, what he needs to learn, when he is ready for it? Are you ready to plan carefully and to move even though one eye may be on the caution signs? Are you ready to move?

In the beginning we indicated that we would discuss several of the questions; so let's review them in order to set the framework for our subsequent discussion.

1. What are the many forms of the mini-courses?
2. Why has the mini-course appeared in so many school systems throughout the country?
3. How does it measure up in terms of curriculum improvement principles?
4. What questions does it's use raise?
5. What is the role of the mini-course in the curriculum of the future?

When looked at in perspective, there seems to be an increasing amount

of evidence to suggest that the mini-course has potential for maxi-effect upon the curriculum of the future.

Since no good curriculum is entirely of the past or of the present, I should like to conclude with two quotations. I am sure you all recall the couplet by Alexander Pope back in the 18th Century.

Not to go back, is somewhat to advance,
And men must walk at least before they dance.

Contrast that with today's statement found in the announcement of the "Voice of Change" days presented at Kennedy High School two years ago in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Hear the voice of change
Hear the winds of moving on
Hear the song of not the same . . .

This is my thought for the day. What is yours?

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